

## WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A cryptographic system in a computer system, said cryptographic system comprising:  
at least one server;

5 a database, said database constructed and arranged to contain sensitive information, said  
database responsive to signals from said server; and

a key repository process on said server, said key repository process responsive to signals  
from said server, said key repository having at least one master key, said at least one master key  
being constructed and arranged to manage information in said database, said key repository  
10 constructed and arranged for centralized administration of said keys, said key repository further  
constructed and arranged to authorize access to said sensitive information in said database;

wherein upon a signal from said server, said key repository authorizes access to said  
information.

15 2. A cryptographic system as in claim 1, wherein said signal from said server to said key  
repository is transmitted from an application.

20 3. A cryptographic system as in claim 2, wherein said application is pre-authorized to  
receive said sensitive information.

4. A cryptographic system as in claim 1, wherein said signal from said server to said key  
repository is transmitted from an application.

25 5. A cryptographic system as in claim 1, wherein said key repository process resides in  
physical memory.

[illegible]